

What's a Plat?

A **plat** is simply a subdivision plan for a property. A **preliminary plat** is a detailed project plan that shows proposed property lines, roads, utilities and grading for a development. It may be revised before becoming a final plat. A **final plat** must conform to the preliminary plat. It establishes the individual lots and includes more detail on exactly how the development will be constructed.

For more info on Planning terms visit:
<http://www.lmnc.org/library/handbook.cfm>

How can I find out more about planning and development in my community?

Keep a Watchful Eye:
Look for public notices at properties and know the vacant or undeveloped areas in your community.

Get Involved in Your Community:
Volunteer, apply or run for town boards and commissions like city council or parks board.

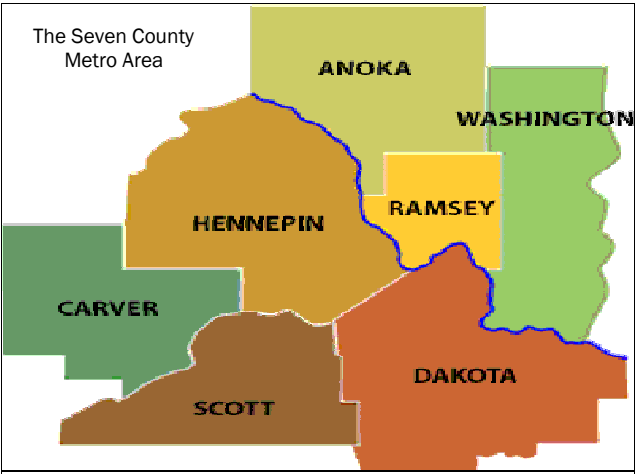
Form a Citizens Group:
Citizen groups are very effective citizen advocates.



By keeping tabs on development and getting involved in the planning process, citizens groups make sure the community is aware and involved.

Attend Planning Commission & City Council Meetings:
Be in contact with planning staff prior to meetings if you're unsure what projects are under consideration. Share your concerns with planning commission and city council members.

Keep media involved and aware:
Communicate with your local media outlets and make sure they keep the public informed of local development proposals.



In the seven county metro area, The Met Council manages 4 critical elements of metropolitan growth:

- Regional Parks
- Sewer & waste water Management
- Aviation Management
- Public Transportation

The Metropolitan Council is designing a framework for accommodating 930,000 new residents by 2030. To learn more, visit: www.metcouncil.org

The Met Council also reviews community comprehensive plans and their amendments.

Many Minnesota counties are a mix of 'incorporated' cities and 'unincorporated' Townships.

City of Shakopee

Helena Township

Scott County, MN

Once incorporated, a city assumes most planning & zoning responsibilities, although the county maintains review authority over county resources like county parks, roads, and certain water resources. In the 7-county metro area, all zoning authority is held by cities or townships. In greater Minnesota, some townships have zoning authority, but land use in most unincorporated areas is managed by the county.

An Activist's Guide to Land Use Planning

How the City Planning And Development Process Works in Minnesota

Welcome to the Planning & Development Process Made Simple!

Planning & development is surprisingly easy to understand. While you'll want to contact your local government for more specific detail, this guide will walk you through some of the basic steps in the community development process. Below you'll find an introduction to some simple planning terms. Open this brochure to unfold an easy to understand development flow-chart. Enjoy!

Comprehensive Plan 101.

A comprehensive plan illustrates a community's vision for the future. It assigns where housing, business, retail development, park land and open space will be located. Within the seven county metro area, the *zoning ordinance* must be consistent with the comprehensive plan. By becoming involved when the comprehensive plan is revised or amended, citizens can greatly influence how a community is developed.

Zoning 101.

Zoning regulates land uses (such as residential, commercial or industrial) in different areas of the community. Zoning plans regulate the uses of property, the height and size of buildings, and the amount of open space on lots in each zoning district. Within each zone, the city permits certain uses and imposes certain conditions.

Example: this neighborhood is zoned mostly 'residential' with some parks and commercial areas.

- Park / Recreational
- Commercial
- Residential

What's an Ordinance?

Ordinances are the laws of a local unit of government: a county, city or township. A zoning ordinance is a type of local ordinance that regulates land use. Other ordinances regulate public health, nuisances, business licenses, mining, etc.

#1- Initial Staff & Developer Meeting

1-Initial Staff Meeting

Applicants often have informal meetings with a city's planning staff to ensure that their ideas meet the general requirements of the city's comprehensive plan.

#2- Developer Submits formal application

2-Formal Application

The development proposal is submitted as a formal application. Some cities require concept plans or sketch plans to be reviewed first, allowing for revisions before the *preliminary plat* is submitted. These early plans may or may not go before the planning commission. If they do, this provides a good opportunity for public involvement and input on a development while the plan is still subject to change.

3-Planning Staff Review

Planning staff ensure that the application is completed properly, meets *ordinance* requirements, and complies with other city plans such as storm water management and trail plans. Staff formally review the project and often make recommendations before passing the project on to the planning commission. If a project needs a *comprehensive plan* amendment, rezoning, or other special approvals, the staff will determine what actions are required.



Formal applications often include scale drawings of the proposal, building dimensions, street & utility connections and storm water management plans.



The 60 Day Rule

Minnesota communities that receive a completed application have 60 days to approve or deny it. Cities may request an extension up to 120 days, after which a decision must be made or the project will usually be automatically approved.



#3- Planning Staff Review & Site Plan

#4- Planning Commission Review [Public Hearing]

► # 5-City Council Review [Public Hearing] ◀

The city council (or town board), is the elected representation at the community level. Once reviewed by the planning commission, a development application must be approved by the city council.

In most communities, the city council has final review authority over any development application. **Only** the city council can approve or deny development. City council meetings are open to the public, and council members often want to hear from residents regarding community development proposals.

Cities must publish notices of public hearings in a local newspaper and post them at city hall. Most cities also notify neighbors by mail and post meeting agendas on their websites.



Sierra Club North Star Chapter
Open Space/Smart Growth Campaign
(612) 659-9124

www.northstar.sierraclub.org

Embrace Open Space Campaign
www.embraceopenspace.org

Want To Learn More About Local Land Use Planning?

Visit the Sierra Club's [Citizens Guide to Local Land Use and Planning](http://www.northstar.sierraclub.org/land) website for everything you need to know about how *your* city development process works.

www.northstar.sierraclub.org/land

► # 4 -Planning Commission Review [Public Hearing] ◀

The Planning Commission's job is to ensure that a proposal complies with the city's *comprehensive plan* and *zoning ordinance*. The planning commission (usually appointed by the City Council) also hears input from outside agencies like the county, soil and water conservation districts, environmental & parks departments.

Planning commission hearings are open to the public and residents of the community are allowed to comment on development proposals. In most communities the planning commission does **not** approve a project. The commission's role is to ensure compliance with city codes and then make a recommendation to the city council that the project be approved, approved with conditions, or denied. Conditions relating to natural resource protection are often attached to a recommendation.

#5- City Council Review [Public Hearing]

6-Building Permit Application & Review.

If the city council approves a development application, building permit review is usually a simple process with little or no public input or involvement.

#6- Building Permit Application and Review.